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The Uplifted Hand.

"Stretch forth thy hand"

—*Jesus*

"No soul has sunk so deeply
That Jesus will not reach
And grasp the hand, uplifted
To Him in silent speech."

Let MY HAND send out
a Message of hope and help.
—Mrs. J. K. Barney

Hands and Hearts Held For Safety Strength and Salvation

I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth. Gen. 14: 22.

This was the method of taking a solemn oath, and is still practiced in the East, the same as with us, when the witness is told to hold up the right hand and solemnly swear to tell the truth.

How frequently the *hand* is mentioned in the Bible, and with what wonderful significance is the word used! Standing frequently for the whole life. Clean hands and pure hearts seem associated together.

"Lord hold my hand, and with Thine own, remold
This ruined heart in every part."

Have you seen the opal, called the sympathetic jewel? At first you know it seems perfectly lusterless, but hold it close a few moments, then open your hand and a surprise awaits you. It gleams with splendor, as contact with the human hand has brought out its beauty, revealing also its value. Just so there are multitudes of poor, lost, despised ones in this world, who might be made to shine with the Gospel glow of hope and joy, if only a sympathetic grasp, warm with the love of Christ, would put them in touch with the Divine hand, ever outstretched to save. He who knows the true value of every human life, once stood in the synagogue and among the peo-

ple gathered there, He saw a man, who had a *withered hand,* which hung limp and nerveless by his side. We are only given a little of the story, but reading as it were between the lines, we are sure the man looked beseechingly at the great Teacher, who was speaking. Then came the command, *"Rise up, and stand forth in the midst!"* I expect the eyes of the man met the gaze of Christ, and he did not stop to think what others would say, or if they would laugh at him, for we read, *"And he arose and stood forth."* Then Jesus looking round about upon them all, said unto the man, *"Stretch forth thy hand."* And he did so; and his hand was restored whole as the other (Luke 6: 6-10).

Not long after that day, *Christ's hands,* which had lain in blessing upon the children and all who came to Him, the hands which had touched the leper, and lifted up the sinful woman, were nailed by *cruel, wicked hands, to the CROSS.*

It is *pierced hands,* touching human hearts today, as He says, with infinite tenderness: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if *any man* hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3-20.) He sees the withered hand, the withered heart, the withered soul. He sees some whose usefulness has withered, who have fallen into temptation, and whose powers have wasted away through disuse or been blasted by sin, and He is ready to speak the word which shall make whole, if we are ready to obey.

Will you put up your hand?

I was in Canada, engaged in our White Ribbon mission, and during my evening talk had incidentally spoken of my department, prison and jail work, of its hopefulness and its discourage-

ments. At the close of the service, a gentleman came to me and asked for a moment's conversation. We stepped aside, and as he gave me a seat, he said, "Of course you do not recognize me, but I have reason to remember you. Six years ago I was an inmate of ——— prison, brought there by a crime committed when under the influence of liquor. The two years of prison life had told upon me sadly, and as I neared the expiration of my sentence, I felt that life had very little for me that was desirable. I knew instinctively how difficult it would be to retrace my steps, and the future beckoning seemed downward rather than upward, because one meant simply drifting, and the other climbing, for which I felt no courage or hope."

From an inner pocket he drew a notebook, from which the first half years' leaves had been torn, and, showing me the date, said, "That was the time when the new life began." Taking the book into my hands, I read, "Sunday evening, old things have passed away, and all things have become new! This morning I was but a wretched thing, tonight I am a man. How strange it all seems, and I am tempted to think it will not last; but it shall. I will make it true. The lady said in the service today, 'I bring a mother's plea to you; I tell you this blessed message from a mother's heart.' It seemed to me, as she showed us Christ, and told of His death for us, I knew myself as one of those who crucified Him, and I could not bear it. I would liked to have gone out and killed myself, like that horrid Judas, but then that prayer, while He hung upon the Cross, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' How it seemed to surround and envelope me in its blessed pity and sweetness. Ah, I had not known. I never could have done

it knowingly. With the dying thief I would cry for mercy, and, like him, it seemed I had no time to lose, so I cried then. My cry was voiceless, but it seemed for a moment to fill the chapel room. I lost the words the lady was speaking and when her voice came to me again she was praying, 'Oh Lord, as Thou seest these *uplifted hands,* speak as Thou didst of old the word of power.' I opened my eyes and saw a number of hands held up. Then I stretched my arm full length, *my right hand should speak for me.* The service was over and we filed out; for the first time I was glad to be alone in my cell. As I dropped upon my knees, the lady's words of prayer came back, 'As these men go to their little rooms and have time to think, let not the tender thoughts of this hour pass away, but be Thou, Oh Christ, near them; let them feel Thee in Thy humanity and in Thy divinity.' It was answered for me; the God-man was there and He comforted me."

The glad tears blinded my eyes as I came to the end of the page; and then he told me a little of the struggles and trials of the first two years, of the homelessness and coldness, of the temptations and discouragements, of the unyielding fight in the strength of him who had come to the rescue. How gradually he won his way to recognition of honesty of life and purpose. How, when the night seemed darkest and he could only feel the hand of his Friend, he was led forth into light and triumph.

The next day I went with him to his home, the first he had ever known in this world, and on the threshold stood a fair, sweet-faced young wife, holding a laughing, blue-eyed baby; a welcome worthy a king, and reward enough for

the patient struggles and manly resistance against evil tendencies and terrible temptations, not to say anything of the reward so definitely promised, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son."

One of the most pitiful wails is found in the 142nd Psalm, "Look on my right hand and see; for there is no man that knoweth me, refuge hath failed me; *no man careth for my soul.*" I was urging a man to sign the *Pledge,* whose words had sounded like the Psalmist's, and he said:

"Oh! lady, I wish I could, but it's no use; I'd break it right off, and I shouldn't like to break your pledge." "Listen," I replied, "here are some words just for you, 'I the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto *thee,* Fear not, I will help thee.'"

"Where did you get *that,* lady, would you mind reading it again?" I opened my Bible to Isaiah xli: 13. He read and re-read the verse then said anxiously, "You see how my hand trembles, do you 'spose I could write my name if God *held my hand?*" "Oh! yes, I am *sure* you could."

"Do you 'spose I'd ever take another glass of liquor if God *held my hand?*" "*Never,* unless you took your hand out of the Lord's, *He* never lets go of any one."

A new hope came into his eyes and a manliness to his face, as straightening himself up, and holding out his right hand, he exclaimed, "I've tried a good many times alone, *now, here goes* for God and me, and we will see what we can do together."

He kept his pledge, frequently saying, *"It's a good grip He gives,* never saw nothing like it in my life."

How many can testify to the same—as they

have found *His hand, a REFUGE, STRENGTH* and *GUIDE.*

"Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe."

"Oh! had I still those days to give,
I've lost, yea lost beyond retrieve,
How glad I would, at His command,
Put all, and more, into *His hand.*

"But, by His grace, the past I leave
To Him, and to that *Hand* I'd cleave,
Remembering ever that His clasp
Is stronger than my strongest grasp."

Many times I have placed my hand over trembling, unsteady ones, as they have written the signature to the Pledge, always with the prayer, "May these hands be strengthened by Thee and used in Thy service."

Hosts of men and women can testify today, "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Ps. 40. 2-2

In the hand of the Lord His people become one, rich and poor, high and low, one in His hand (See Ezek. 37: 19-21).

How readily should all those redeemed, led and blessed by that same good hand, give to one another, in Him, the right hand of fellowship, and receive one another even as Christ hath received them to the glory of God.

"Sound over all waters, reach out from all lands,
The chorus of voices, the clasping of hands."
"For God and Home and Every Land."

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